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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
25 June 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos, South Vietnam, and
Iran

1. Laos

In south-central Laos, the Pathet Lao have continued pressure against neutralist units which had previously withdrawn from Nhommarath, Mahaxay, and Lak Sao. Complete Communist takeover of the remaining neutralist positions in this area appears likely in the relatively near future. FAR forces are increasingly concerned over a possible threat to Thakhek, but there have been no clear indications of an imminent Communist move against the town. At Attopeu, the situation appears to be temporarily stabilized, although the Communists hold the initiative and could renew the attack at any time. After two weeks of relative calm in the Plaine des Jarres, small-scale Pathet Lao action was renewed on 22 June. However, weather may hamper activity in this area.

2. South Vietnam

Although the number of Viet Cong attacks has again declined, these attacks have included some larger-size actions, particularly in the Mekong delta.

Despite the government's 16 June agreement with the Buddhist leaders, the Buddhist issue remains explosive. There are increasing signs that the government contemplates some repressive measures, and these could precipitate further agitation.

3. Iran

a. Fars Province - Iranian Army activity in the area of tribal dissidence around Shiraz has become a mopping-up operation, with the last remaining

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band of insurgent tribesmen split up and in hiding. A large part of the specially created task force which has been engaged in anti-tribal activity in this area has either returned to unit stations or has assembled for such movement. Probably somewhat less than half of the original force of about 13,000 ground-force troops is still deployed in the tribal area, and air strikes against suspected tribal targets have apparently ceased.

b. Kurdistan - Tehran has cooled toward the Kurdish rebel cause in Iraq, and this may have repercussions in Iranian Kurdistan. It is not likely that the government could, or would wish to, prevent altogether assistance from reaching the Iraqi Kurds from Iran, but it seems likely that cross-border movement will be controlled at least as well as during the 1961-62 period of fighting in Iraq. The presence in Iranian Kurdistan of considerable government military forces now increasing their combat readiness as they enter summer field training will be a deterrent to antigovernment action there.

c. Religious Dissidence - Antigovernment activity by the group that sparked the 5 June rioting has recently been limited to attempts to distribute antiregime leaflets in a few centers of religious conservatism. Except for the brief period of rioting in early June, the month-long period of Shiite religious mourning has proceeded quietly, but the reactionary mullahs are still in close and frequent contact with their following. The next prime occasion for religious fanaticism falls on 12 July, when some form of protest against the Shah's liberal policies may take place.

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